

5/11/2024

Ministry of Housing and Urban Development
Te Tūāpapa Kura Kāinga
PO Box 82
Wellington 6140

Submission on the proposed topic for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's 2025 Long-term Insights Briefing

Tēnā koutou katoa

Age Concern New Zealand (ACNZ) welcomes the opportunity to have input on the proposed topic for the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development's 2025 Long-term Briefing: *The opportunities and impacts associated with the trend towards residential high-rise housing.*

We were pleased to provide a submission on your 2023 Briefing on the *Long-term implications of our ageing population for our housing and urban futures.* There is information in the 2023 Long-term Insights Briefing that will be relevant to the proposed new topic.

Overall, we **support** the proposed topic for 2025. The trend to residential high-rise housing will have implications for home ownership rates, the availability of rental accommodation and for the wellbeing of communities and neighbourhoods.

About Age Concern New Zealand

Age Concern New Zealand is a trusted charity working in local communities throughout Aotearoa New Zealand to support older people, their friends and whānau. We have 29 local Age Concerns operating in 40 locations throughout the country and a national office based in Wellington.

Our strategic goal is:

Every older person feels connected, has positive choices and can age well.

Our values of Dignity. Wellbeing. Equity and Respect for older people are our guiding lights and underpin everything we do.

Our core services include advocacy and public awareness, social connection, health promotion, elder abuse and neglect prevention, and providing support through expert information, advice and referrals.

Wellbeing in older age is dependent on access across our lifetime to secure housing, sufficient income, employment, health and social services, social connection and a safe environment.

Our comments:

1. Consider the suitability and impact of high-rise residential housing for older New Zealanders and those with disabilities.

- a. High-rise housing will need to be accessible and use universal design to meet the housing needs of older people and people with disabilities of all ages.
- b. The number of older New Zealanders is growing. Within ten years the over 65 population is expected to reach 1.2 million, with the over 85 age group being the fastest growing. ¹ Over 65s are also increasingly diverse with Māori, Pasifika and Asian older populations growing at a faster rate than European/Pakeha seniors.
- c. Increasing age comes with increasing rates of disability and health need. Forty-six percent of over 65s have mobility issues, 28% agility issues, 11% have sight issues and 10% have difficulty remembering. ²
- d. Some units within the high-rise housing would need to be on one level rather than on two or more floors to suit the requirements of older people and those with disabilities.
- e. Evacuation procedures for high-rise residential housing need to be clear and familiar to all residents and factor in the needs of people who may be less mobile, in wheelchairs, or be sight or hearing impaired.
- f. Maintenance schedules need to ensure residents always have direct means of access to and from their homes. For example, if there are two lifts within each high-

¹ <https://officeforseniors.govt.nz/better-later-life-strategy/>

² <https://www.msd.govt.nz/about-msd-and-our-work/publications-resources/research/older-people-experiencing-vulnerability-and-multiple-disadvantage-in-new-zealand/older-people-experiencing-vulnerability-and-multiple-disadvantage-in-new-zealand.html>

rise housing development, then only one lift at a time should ever be undergoing maintenance.

- g. Residents in high-rise residential housing must have the ability to regulate indoor temperatures via heat pumps, air conditioning and safely opening windows and doors. As we age, our ability to regulate our body temperature is reduced, which in combination with the impact of climate change, means that people must be able to maintain a safe and comfortable temperature.

2. Consider safety issues for those living in and near residential high-rise housing.

- a. Unfortunately, high rise and high-density housing here and overseas have a reputation for higher rates of crime, anti-social behaviour and run-down conditions.³
- b. If the trend for this type of housing becomes the norm, then best practice design will need to be established and regulated. We hear of some older people feeling unsafe in social housing, where they are too fearful to venture out. This is not acceptable, and we do not want that outcome for any New Zealanders living in high-rise residential housing.
- c. All occupiers of medium and high-rise residential housing have the right to the quiet enjoyment of their home and surrounding neighbourhood.

3. Explore the impact of the external environment around high-rise residential housing.

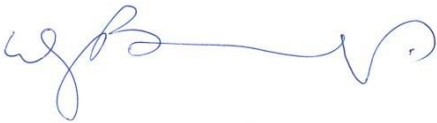
- a. For example, is there green space nearby or within the complexes and is the housing close to public transport, shopping centres, and health services? These factors impact significantly on physical and mental wellbeing, especially for people living on fixed low incomes, including those dependent on NZ Superannuation.
- b. High-rise housing needs to solve more than a shortage of housing, it will need to facilitate a sense of community and connection to people and services.

³ <https://adnz.org.nz/news-and-events/news/striking-a-balance-with-high-density-housing>

Closing comment

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide our submission on the proposed topic for HUD's Long-term Insights Briefing for 2025. We look forward to commenting on the Draft Briefing when it is released next year.

Nāku Noa, nā,



Karen Billings-Jensen
Chief Executive
Age Concern New Zealand